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RUMJSL/AMEMBASSY SEOUL 58

BT

S E C R E T RABAT 3886

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGSI MASS KS MO

SUBJ: SALE OF KOREAN MANUFACTURED M-16 RIFLES TO MOROCCO

REF: SEOUL 5260

1. FROM OUR PERSPECTIVE, WE SUPPORT SALE OF KOREAN M-16 RIFLES TO MOROCCO. SALE WOULD FIT IN WELL WITH OUR POLICY OF ENCOURAGING THE MOROCCANS TO LOOK TO OTHER FRIENDLY SOURCES FOR PROCUREMENT AND FINANCING OF ARMS. MOROCCO, OF COURSE, ALREADY HAS A SMALL NUMBER OF M-16'S.

2. M-16 TRANSACTION COULD AT LEAST marginally AFFECT BROADER QUESTION OF GOM RELATIONS WITH ROK AND DFRK. WE GATHER FROM KOREAN CHARGE IN RABAT THAT ROKG IS CONCERNED OVER RELATIONSHIP WITH MOROCCO OVER LONGER TERM. CHARGE EXPRESSED VIEW TO EMBOFF AUG 14 THAT GOM'S FUTURE ATTITUDE WILL BE LINKED TO GREAT EXTENT TO BENEFITS ROK CAN PROVIDE TO MOROCCO CAOMPARED WITH WHAT NORTH KOREANS ABLE AND WILLING TO OFFER. CHARGE BELIEVES MOROCCANS WERE ON VERGE OF GRANTING DIPLOMATIC RECOGNITION TO NORTH KOREA LAST YEAR BUT PULLED BACK AT LAST MOMENT FROM THIS MOVE. CHARGE EXPECTS THAT NORTH KOREAN PROBES WILL PERSIST, AND GOM'S CONCERN FOR NON-ALIGNED IMAGE WILL LEAD MOROCCO AT VERY LEAST TO CONTINUE TO RECEIVE NORTH KOREAN EMISSARIES WHEN THEY ASK TO COME HERE.

3. WHATEVER THE FINAL DECISION TAKEN ON M-16'S, WE HOPE THIS MATTER CAN BE HANDLED IN SUCH WAY AS TO AVOID DAMAGE TO US-MOROCCAN RELATIONS. SUCH DAMAGE COULD WELL RESULT IF GOM GETS IDEA THAT USG IS RESPONSIBLE FOR BLOCKING MOROCCAN ACQUISITION OF M-16'S FROM ROKG. GOM WOULD FIND SUCH ACTION ON OUR PART HARD TO RECONCILE WITH WHAT IT UNDERSTANDS TO BE OUR INTENTION TO CONTINUE TO COOPERATE BILATERALLY IN EFFORT TO MODERNIZE ITS ARMED FORCES. COON

State Department review